

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 026902

FOLLOWING REPEAT ADDIS ABABA 1253 ACTION SECSTATE ASMARA
MOGADISCIO NAIROBI KHARTOUM LONDON PARIS USCINCEUR
2 FEBRUARY.

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 1253

E.O. 11652: GDS
SUBJECT: CALL ON PMAC CHAIRMAN TEFERI BANTE
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, ASEC, ET, US

REF: STATE 019954

1. SUMMARY. IN COURSE OF MY FEBRUARY 1 CALL ON PMAC CHAIRMAN
TEFERI BANTE, HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE ETHIOPIAN PROVISIONAL
MILITARY GOVERNMENT DESIRES TO STRENGTHEN THE TRADITIONAL CLOSE
RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. AND THAT THERE IS NOTHING IN THE PRESENT
ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT WHICH SHOULD CAUSE DIFFICULTIES
FOR THOSE RELATIONS. TEFERI BANTE SAID THAT THE EPMG DOES NOT BELIEVE
IN A MILITARY SOLUTION OF THE ERITREAN PROBLEM AND THAT IT WILL
CONTINUE TO SEEK A PEACEFUL SOLUTION THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS, BUT INDI-
CATED THERE IS A STRONG POSSIBILITY THE ARMED FORCES WILL HAVE TO
TAKE VIGOROUS "RESTRAINING ACTION" AGAINST THE INSURGENTS IN THE
NEAR FUTURE. HE EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT THAT THE RECENT NEGO-
TIATIONS WITH SOMALI OFFICIALS HAVE THUS FAR BEEN ENTIRELY
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UNSUCCESSFUL, THAT SOME AMERICAN INSTRUCTORS AT THE NATIONAL
UNIVERSITY HAVE RETURNED TO THE U.S., AND THAT TENNECO HAS DIS-
CONTINUED ITS DRILLING OPERATIONS IN THE OGADEN. IN RESPONSE TO MY
DISCUSSION OF THE INCREASING INSECURITY OF

THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN ETHIOPIA, TEFERI BANTE SAID THAT MEASURES WILL BE TAKEN TO IMPROVE THE SECURITY OF AMERICANS HERE, PARTICULARLY IN THE ADDIS ABABA AREA WHERE TEN RECENT STONING INCIDENTS HAVE OCCURRED. HE ALSO SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD ENDEAVOR TO INFLUENCE THE MEDIA TO AVOID VEILED ATTACKS ON THE U.S. AND REQUESTED THAT THE USG MAKE RECIPROCAL EFFORTS WITH REGARD TO U.S. NEWS MEDIA. END SUMMARY.

2. TEFERI BANTE RECEIVED ME IN THE EX-EMPEROR'S OFFICE IN MENELIK PALACE. THE FIRST AND SECOND PMAC VICE CHAIRMEN, AIR FORCE CAPTAIN SISAYE, TWO MILITARY NOTETAKERS AND AN INTERPRETER WERE ALSO PRESENT. TEFERI'S COLLEAGUES DID NOT SPEAK EXCEPT FOR TWICE WHISPERING SUGGESTIONS TO HIM.

3. AFTER EXPRESSING THE PERSONAL BEST WISHES OF THE SECRETARY AND OF MYSELF, I SAID THAT MY GOVERNMENT AND OUR EMBASSY HAD FOLLOWED WITH THE GREATEST INTEREST DEVELOPMENTS IN ETHIOPIA SINCE THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT BEGAN HERE ABOUT A YEAR AGO. DURING THIS TIME MY GOVERNMENT HAD DEMONSTRATED ITS DESIRE FOR EXCELLENT RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA NOT ONLY IN WORDS BUT IN DEEDS, PARTICULARLY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR AID PROGRAMS. THE SECRETARY WAS VERY PLEASED BY THE STATEMENTS MADE TO HIM EARLY THIS WEEK BY FOREIGN MINISTER KIFLE WIDAJO EXPRESSING DEEP INTEREST ON THE PART OF THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT IN THE CONTINUATION OF CLOSE AND FRIENDLY RELATIONS. THE SECRETARY HAD TOLD THE FOREIGN MINISTER, AND ASKED ME TO EMPHASIZE TO TEFERI BANTE THAT OUR GOVERNMENT WISHED TO CONTINUE THE FRIENDLY RELATIONS WE HAVE ENJOYED WITH ETHIOPIA AS MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL AND IN OUR MUTUAL INTERESTS. MY GOVERNMENT IS DEMONSTRATING THIS BY CONTINUING ITS MILITARY, ECONOMIC AND DROUGHT RELIEF PROGRAMS, BY ASSIGNING TO ETHIOPIA ONE OF OUR MOST DISTINGUISHED CAREER DIPLOMATS, AND BY EXERCISING MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY WITH REGARD TO MILITARY EQUIPMENT. THE STATE DEPARTMENT LOOKS FORWARD TO CONTINUING DISCUSSIONS WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE ON THE DETAILS OF THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND HOPES TO WORK OUT A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE PROGRAM WITH HIM.

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4. TEFERI BANTE BEGAN BY EXPRESSING APPRECIATION FOR MY CALL, FOR THE EXPRESSION OF BEST WISHES, AND FOR THE EXTENSIVE PAST AMERICAN ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA. HE COMMENTED ON THE LONG HISTORY OF VERY CLOSE U.S.-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS AND SAID IT IS THE INTENTION OF HIS GOVERNMENT TO "FURTHER STRENGTHEN" THOSE RELATIONS. HE EMPHASIZED AT SOME LENGTH THAT A MAJOR OBJECTIVE OF THE PRESENT REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT IS TO DEVELOP A SPIRIT AND CAPABILITY OF SELF-RELIANCE IN ETHIOPIA AND PLACE IT IN A POSITION WHERE IT WILL NEED LESS AND LESS FOREIGN ASSISTANCE, A DEVELOPMENT HE WAS SURE AMERICANS WOULD APPRECIATE. HE ALSO WAS CONFIDENT THAT A SELF-RELIANT ETHIOPIA COULD CONTRIBUTE MORE TO MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL U.S.-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS. THERE WAS CERTAINLY NOTHING IN THE RECENT DEVELOPMENT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT WHICH SHOULD CREATE

SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES FOR RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.
(COMMENT: I BELIEVE HE HAD THE RECENT PROCLAMATION OF ETHIOPIAN SOCIALISM IN MIND AT THIS POINT.) MY GOVERNMENT SHOULD CLEARLY UNDERSTAND THAT THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT HAS NO INTENTION WHATSOEVER IN THE COURSE OF ITS DEVELOPMENT OF "DROPPING OLD FRIENDS AND SUBSTITUTING NEW ONES."

5. TEFERI BANTE THEN TURNED TO THE PROBLEM OF ERITREA.
(COMMENT: THROUGHOUT OUR CONVERSATION, HEAVY FIRING WAS GOING ON IN ASMARA.) THE ERITREAN PROBLEM WAS THE FAULT OF THE PREVIOUS REGIME BUT HAD BEEN INHERITED BY THE EPMG AND MUST BE DEALT WITH. THE EPMG DESIRES A PEACEFUL SOLUTION AND HAS BEEN NEGOTIATING FOR A LENGTHY PERIOD TO ACHIEVE SUCH A SOLUTION. ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN SOME SUCCESS IN ITS EFFORTS OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY, NO SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS HAS YET BEEN MADE WITH THE INTERNAL INSURGENTS. MEANWHILE NUMEROUS INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE HAVE OCCURRED IN ERITREA. FOR THE SAKE OF THE SAFETY OF ALL, INCLUDING FOREIGN DIPLOMATS AND CONSULAR PERSONNEL, IT MIGHT SOON BE NECESSARY FOR THE ARMED FORCES TO TAKE VIGOROUS "RESTRAINING ACTION" AGAINST THE INSURGENTS. THIS SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN AS AN INDICATION THAT THE EPMG SEEKS A MILITARY SOLUTION TO THE ERITREAN PROBLEM. EVEN AFTER THE MILITARY ACTION, THE EPMG WILL SINCERELY STRIVE FOR A NEGOTIATED PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE ISSUE.

6. TURNING TO SOMALIA, TEFERI BANTE SAID THERE HAVE BEEN VARIOUS CONVERSATIONS IN RECENT WEEKS WITH SOMALI REPRESENTATIVES REGARDING ISSUES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. THESE NEGOTIATIONS HAD REALLY MADE NO PROGRESS AND HE HAD BEEN QUITE DISAPPOINTED THAT PRESIDENT CONFIDENTIAL

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SIAD BARRE HAD MADE A PRESS STATEMENT REFERRING TO ETHIOPIA IN THE MIDST OF THESE NEGOTIATIONS IN WHICH HE SAID THAT COLONIALISM AND SOCIALISM DO NOT MIX. THE EPMG NOW AS BEFORE IS MOST ANXIOUS TO ARRIVE AT A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF ETHIOPIA'S DIFFERENCES WITH SOMALIA AND WILL CONTINUE EFFORTS TO PEACEFULLY RESOLVE THEM.

7. TEFERI BANTE THEN SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN SURPRISED AND DISAPPOINTED BY THE RECENT RATHER ABRUPT DEPARTURE TO THE U.S. FOR REASONS HE DID NOT UNDERSTAND OF A NUMBER OF AMERICAN TEACHERS AT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY. HE ALSO SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN SURPRISED AND DISAPPOINTED BY THE RECENT SUSPENSION OF OIL DRILLING ACTIVITY IN THE OGADEN BY THE TENNECO CORPORATION.

8. IN CONCLUSION, TEFERI BANTE SAID THAT HE LOOKED FORWARD TO MANY FUTURE TALKS SUCH AS WE WERE THEN HAVING AND LOOKED FORWARD TO THE EARLY ARRIVAL OF THE NEW AMERICAN AMBASSADOR.

9. IN REPLY I EXPRESSED ADMIRATION FOR THE NOBLE OBJECTIVES OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT, SAID THAT AMERICANS DO INDEED APPRECIATE EFFORTS BY ANY PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT TO BECOME SELF-RELIANT, AND SAID THAT MY GOVERNMENT TOO SAW NOTHING IN THE RECENT

DEVELOPMENT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT WHICH NEED CREATE DIFFICULTIES FOR FUTURE U.S.-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS. WITH REGARD TO ERITREA, I ONLY WISHED TO SAY THAT MY GOVERNMENT, WHILE FULLY APPRECIATING THE COMPLEXITY OF THE PROBLEM, HOPED THAT HERE AS IN OTHER CONFLICT AREAS AROUND THE WORLD A PEACEFUL SOLUTION COULD BE ACHIEVED THROUGH NEGOTIATION. WITH REGARD TO SOMALIA, I SAID THAT MY GOVERNMENT HAD UNDERSTOOD THE GROWING CONCERN OF THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS REGARDING THIS PROBLEM AND THAT IN THIS AREA ALSO WE WERE MOST HOPEFUL THAT NEGOTIATIONS WOULD EVENTUALLY ALLEVIATE THE PROBLEM.

10. I THEN EXPLAINED IN SOME DETAIL THE REASONS FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE AMERICAN TEACHERS, EMPHASIZING THAT WE COULD NOT JUSTIFY TO CONGRESS THE RETENTION OF MOST OF THE TEACHERS WHEN THE NORMAL UNIVERSITY YEAR HAD BEEN CANCELLED, THAT THERE HAD BEEN DETAILED DISCUSSIONS OF EACH INDIVIDUAL CASE IN ADVANCE WITH THE UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES, THAT SOME TEACHERS WHOSE RETENTION MADE SENSE DESPITE THE CLOSING OF THE UNIVERSITY, HAD STAYED HERE, AND THAT WE INTENDED TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT SOME TEACHERS AT THE CONFIDENTIAL

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UNIVERSITY NEXT YEAR IF A NORMAL ACADEMIC YEAR OCCURS.

11. AS FOR THE SUSPENSION OF TENNECO'S ACTIVITIES, THE EMBASSY HAD BEEN DISAPPOINTED BY THIS DECISION AND HAD DISCUSSED IT WITH THE PRINCIPAL TENNECO REPRESENTATIVE HERE. IT APPEARED THAT THE BASIC REASON FOR TENNECO'S DECISION HAD BEEN THE FAILURE TO FIND MEANINGFUL QUANTITIES OF OIL IN THE EIGHT DRILLINGS WHICH HAD BEEN MADE. HE WOULD UNDERSTAND THAT THE USG HAD NO CONTROL OVER TENNECO'S DECISION TO SUSPEND ACTIVITIES FOR ECONOMIC REASONS.

12. I THEN DISCUSSED AT SOME LENGTH THE PROBLEM OF THE SECURITY OF AMERICAN CITIZENS IN ETHIOPIA, WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE AREA OF THE TEFERI MAKONNEN SCHOOL NEAR THE EMBASSY COMPOUND. I EXPRESSED MY VIEW THAT THE EPMG COULD IMPROVE THE SECURITY OF AMERICANS IN ETHIOPIA BY (1) INSTRUCTING POLICE AUTHORITIES TO GIVE A HIGH PRIORITY TO EFFECTIVE POLICE CONTROL IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF THE TEFERI MAKONNEN SCHOOL, (2) SENDING A DIRG MEMBER OR OTHER SUITABLE OFFICIAL TO SPEAK TO THE STUDENT BODY OF THAT SCHOOL, AND (3) SUGGESTING TO PRESS, RADIO AND TELEVISION COMMENTATORS THAT THEY DESIST FROM VEILED ATTACKS AGAINST THE U.S. IN THIS CONTEXT, I REVIEWED RECENT ANTI-FOREIGN AND ANTI-AMERICAN COMMENTS OF THE MEDIA AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE SAFETY OF AMERICANS. I ADDED THAT IT WOULD BE EVEN MORE HELPFUL IF HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD COMMENT ON THE DESIRABILITY OF THE PEACE CORPS PROGRAM OR ENCOURAGE THE PRESS, RADIO AND TELEVISION TO MAKE OCCASIONAL FAVORABLE COMMENTS ON U.S. AID PROGRAMS IN ETHIOPIA.

13. TEFERI TANTE REPLIED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT OF COURSE STRONGLY DISAPPROVED OF ANY HARRASSMENT OF AMERICANS. AS I KNEW, STUDENTS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD ARE DIFFICULT TO CONTROL. NEVERTHELESS, HE WOULD SEE THAT MEASURES WERE TAKEN TO IMPROVE THE SECURITY

OF AMERICANS IN ETHIOPIA, PARTICULARLY IN THE AREA OF THE TEFERI MAKONNE SCHOOL. STUDENTS WHO STONE AMERICAN VEHICLES WILL BE TRIED AND PUNISHED UNDER ETHIOPIAN LAW. AS FOR THE PRESS, RADIO AND TELEVISION, IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO CONTROL THEIR UTTERANCES. NEVERTHELESS HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE HEED OF MY REMARKS AND WOULD ENDEAVOR TO HELP IN THIS REGARD. HE HOPED THAT MY GOVERNMENT WOULD SEEK TO INFLUENCE AMERICAN NEWS MEDIA TO AVOID INACCURATE AND BIASED COMMENTARY ON ITS PART.

14. TEFERI BANTE SAID HE WAS GLAD TO HEAR THAT WE INTENDED TO
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SUPPORT SOME AMERICAN TEACHERS AT THE UNIVERSITY IF

NORMAL

ACADEMIC YEAR BEGINS IN 1975. WITH REGARD TO TENNECO, HE THOUGHT THE PROSPECTS AT THE NINTH WELL HAD LOOKED PARTICULARLY FAVORABLE AND HE HOPED OUR GOVERNMENT WOULD ENCOURAGE TENNECO TO PROCEED WITH THE DRILLING OF THIS WELL.

15. IN CONCLUSION, TEFERI BANTE SAID HE WAS VERY PLEASED THAT I HAD FRANKLY DISCUSSED THE PROBLEM OF THE SECURITY OF AMERICANS AND THAT HE WAS IN FULL AGREEMENT THAT COMPLETE CANDOR IN THE DISCUSSION OF SUCH PROBLEMS WAS ENTIRELY APPROPRIATE. HE ASKED ME TO CONVEY TO SECRETARY KISSINGER HIS APPRECIATION FOR THE VERY GRATIFYING MEETING WHICH THE SECRETARY AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD HAD AT THE BEGINNING OF THE WEEK.

16. IN DEPARTING I POINTED OUT THAT THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE'S HEARING ON THE NOMINATION OF AMBASSADOR HUMMEL WAS EXPECTED DURING THE FOLLOWING WEEK. WYMAN UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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